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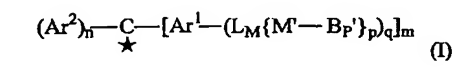
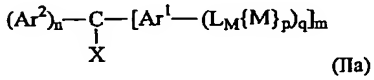
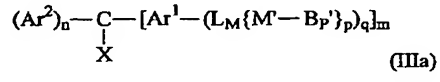


(I)



(IIa)



(IIIa)

(57) Abstract: The present invention provides a method of forming an ion of formula (I) comprising the steps of: (i) reacting a compound of the formula (IIa); with a biopolymer, B_P, having at least one group capable of reacting with M to form a covalent linkage, to provide a biopolymer derivative of the formula (IIIa); and (ii) cleaving the C-X bond between X and the a-carbon atom of the derivative of formula (IIIa) to form the ion of formula (I); where: C * is a carbon atom bearing a single positive charge or a single negative charge; and X is a group capable of being cleaved from the a-carbon atom to form an ion of formula (I). The biopolymer derivatives of the invention have enhanced ionisability with respect to free biopolymer (B_P) enabling improved analysis of the biopolymer using mass spectrometry.

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ATTACHMENT A